

CHAPTER 3. PREPARATION OF CONGRESSIONAL CORRESPONDENCE

Par.

1. What is congressional correspondence?
2. What are the guidelines for congressional correspondence?

1. **What is congressional correspondence?** Congressional correspondence includes all written communications sent to or received from Members of Congress, congressional committees, staff members, individuals, and organizations whose correspondence has been forwarded by a Member of Congress for assistance in preparing a reply.
2. **What are the guidelines for congressional correspondence?** The following guidelines apply when preparing congressional correspondence.
 - a. **Due dates.** The deadline for preparing a response to a congressional letter is five working days from the date of receipt in the Office of the Secretary of Transportation's (OST's) Executive Secretariat (S-10), and five working days from the date of receipt from the FHWA Executive Secretariat (HOAES). Action offices are expected to meet the due date as assigned. If circumstances are such that the due date must be extended from one to five days, contact the HOAES for further instructions. Requests for extension from S-10 must be made in writing or by e-mail, but they should be discussed with the HOAES before any action is taken.
 - b. **Acknowledgment letters.** An acknowledgment letter and/or interim reply should be used only when the final reply cannot be made by the assigned due date. Check with the HOAES before preparing acknowledgments or interim replies for correspondence prepared for signature by the Secretary or Deputy Secretary of Transportation.
 - c. **Types of replies.**
 - (1) **Reply to constituent.** When a Member specifically requests the reply be sent directly to the constituent, forward a copy of the reply and incoming to the Member (shown on the original), unless the Member specifically requests no copy.
 - (2) **Reply to member.** If the Member is to forward the final reply, prepare the reply in accordance with the instructions on the following pages.
 - d. **Guidance on congressional reports to Congress.** (See Appendix D).
 - e. **Congressional committee correspondence.** When a Member of Congress writes as Chairperson or Member of a Committee, address the reply as follows:

(1) **Senate Committee Chairman**

THE HONORABLE (FULL NAME)
CHAIRMAN, COMMITTEE ON (FULL NAME OF COMMITTEE)
UNITED STATES SENATE
WASHINGTON, DC 20510

Dear Mr./Madam Chairman:

(2) **Senate Subcommittee Chairman**

THE HONORABLE (FULL NAME)
CHAIRMAN, SUBCOMMITTEE ON (FULL NAME OF
SUBCOMMITTEE)
(FULL NAME OF PARENT COMMITTEE)
UNITED STATES SENATE
WASHINGTON, DC 20510

Dear Mr./Madam Chairman:

(3) **House Committee Chairman**

THE HONORABLE (FULL NAME)
CHAIRMAN, COMMITTEE ON (FULL NAME OF COMMITTEE)
U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
WASHINGTON, DC 20515

Dear Mr./Madam Chairman:

(4) **House Subcommittee Chairman**

THE HONORABLE (FULL NAME)
CHAIRMAN, SUBCOMMITTEE ON (FULL NAME OF
SUBCOMMITTEE)
(FULL NAME OF PARENT COMMITTEE)
U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
WASHINGTON, DC 20515

Dear Mr./Madam Chairman:

- f. Figures 3.1 through 3.8 provide samples of congressional correspondence with specific procedures and instructions.



Office of the Administrator

400 Seventh St., S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20590

(Stamp or type date
here when signed)

Refer to: HXX-1

The Honorable (Full Name)
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator (Surname):

When correspondence is received from a staff person of a Member of Congress or a congressional committee, address the reply to the Member or the Chairperson of the Committee. Reference the staff member's letter in the opening paragraph. The reply may be sent directly to the sender only if the reply pertains solely to congressional staff work or if a direct reply has been requested. An "Attention" line may be shown on the envelope.

Example:

ATTENTION MR/MS (FULL NAME)
THE HONORABLE (FULL NAME)
UNITED STATES SENATE
WASHINGTON, DC 20510

NOTE: Do not use an attention line in the actual correspondence; only use the attention line on the envelope if the Member asks that the reply be sent to the attention of a particular staff member.

Sincerely,

(Full Name)
(Title)



Figure 3.1



U.S. Department
of Transportation
**Federal Highway
Administration**

Office of the Administrator

400 Seventh St., S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20590

(Stamp or type date
here when signed)

Refer to: HXX-1

Mr. (Full Name)
Chief of Staff to the late
Senator (Full Name)
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Mr./Ms. (Surname):

If it becomes necessary to address a letter to the office of a deceased Member of Congress before a successor has been appointed or elected, address the letter (by name, if known) to the chief of staff or administrative assistant. The letter may also be addressed to the secretary of the deceased Member as shown below.

Mr./Ms. (Full Name)
Secretary to the Late (Member's Full Name)
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Mr./Ms. (Surname):

Sincerely,

(Full Name)
(Title)



Figure 3.2



U.S. Department
of Transportation
**Federal Highway
Administration**

Office of the Administrator

400 Seventh St., S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20590

(Stamp or type date
here when signed)

Refer to: HXX-1

The Honorable (Full Name)
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator (Surname):

When a constituent's letter results in an inquiry from more than one Member of Congress, send an original to each Member. Indicate in each letter the name(s) of the other Member(s) who received or will be receiving an identical response. The official file and distribution copies should show the notation:

Identical letter:
The Honorable John Doe
United States Senate

The Honorable John Smith
U.S. House of Representatives

Sincerely,

(Full Name)
(Title)



Figure 3.3

(Stamp or type date
here when signed)

Refer to: HXX-1

The Honorable (Full Name)
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator (Surname):

The following copies are to be made for all congressional correspondence:

1. Prepare one copy of all congressional correspondence for the Office of the Assistant Secretary for Governmental Affairs (I), whether the correspondence is for signature by an OST or FHWA official.
2. Prepare copies as called for on the control sheet.
3. For all congressional correspondence, regardless of the signature element, prepare copies for the FHWA organizational elements as follows:
 - a. One copy for the Administrator (HOA-1)
 - b. One copy for the Deputy Administrator (HOA-2)
 - c. One copy for the Executive Director (HOA-3)
 - d. One copy for the Legislative Analysis Team Leader (HPLS-40)
 - e. One copy for the HOAES (attach copy of an enclosure).
 - f. When a congressional letter is signed by the Federal Highway Administrator or a higher-level DOT official, the copies listed in paragraphs 1 and 3 (a) through (e) are made by the HOAES. Do not make copies for HOA once the package is returned.
 - g. Copies as required to keep other offices informed.



Figure 3.4

- h. Copies for the appropriate Division Administrator when congressional correspondence has a bearing on the Federal-aid Highway Program.

Letters of interest to a State will normally relate to:

1. program progress,
2. status of funds,
3. selection of projects for Federal participation,
4. highway location or design, and
5. other highway-related matters.

On matters that are of interest to the State, the action office will:

1. prepare one set of the incoming and outgoing correspondence for the field use, and
2. mail the one set directly to the appropriate Division Administrator.

Sincerely,

(Full Name)
(Title)



Office of the Administrator

400 Seventh St., S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20590

(Stamp or type date
here when signed)

Refer to: HXX-1

The Honorable (Full Name)
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator (Surname):

Thank you for your letter of May 10 concerning _____
_____.

This is the format for a letter prepared to a Senator at his/her Washington Office.

A Senator frequently forwards correspondence received from an individual or organization (congressional constituent). When the reply is made to the Senator, return the correspondence if it is requested. Before returning the original correspondence, make a copy for the official file. If the fact that the constituent's correspondence is being returned to the Senator has not been mentioned in the body of the letter, show "Transmitted Correspondence" after "Enclosure:" as shown in this sample.

Sincerely,

(Full Name)
(Title)

Enclosure:
Transmitted Correspondence



Figure 3.5



Office of the Administrator

400 Seventh St., S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20590

Refer to: HXX-1

The Honorable (Full Name)
United States Senator
(Mailing Address)
(City, State ZIP Code)

Dear Senator (Surname):

Thank you for your letter of March 10 concerning _____
_____.

This is the format for a letter prepared to a Senator at an address other than his/her Washington office.

When writing to a Senator at an address other than his/her Washington office, a copy is also sent to the Senator's Washington office. Show the fact that a copy is being sent to the Washington office on all copies, including the original (as shown below).

When writing to a Senator at an address other than his/her Washington office, a copy is sent to the Senator's Washington office. The HOAES will photocopy the signed original and mail the original to the district office. A photocopy will be sent to the Washington office by HOAES. An envelope addressed to the Washington office should be included with the package, along with a copy of the incoming letter.

Sincerely,

(Full Name)
(Title)

Enclosure:
Transmitted Correspondence

cc:
Washington Office



Figure 3.6



Office of the Administrator

400 Seventh St., S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20590

(Stamp or type date
here when signed)

Refer to: HXX-1

The Honorable (Full Name)
U. S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Congressman/woman (Surname):

Thank you for your letter of May 10 concerning _____
_____.

This the format for a letter prepared to a Representative at his/her Washington office.

A Representative frequently forwards correspondence received from an individual or organization (congressional constituent). When the reply is made to the Representative, return the correspondence if it is requested. Before returning the original correspondence, make a copy of the official file. If the fact that the constituent's correspondence is being returned to the Representative has not been mentioned in the body of the letter, show "Transmitted Correspondence" after "Enclosure:" as shown in this sample.

Sincerely,

(Full Name)
(Title)

Enclosure:
Transmitted Correspondence



Figure 3.7



Office of the Administrator

400 Seventh St., S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20590

Refer to: HXX-1

The Honorable (Full Name)
Member, U.S. House of
Representatives
(Mailing Address)
(City, State ZIP Code)

Dear Congressman/woman (Surname):

Thank you for your letter of March 10 concerning _____
_____.

This is the format for a letter prepared to a Representative at an address other than the Washington office.

When writing to a Representative at an address other than his/her Washington office, a copy is sent to the Representative's Washington office. The HOAES will photocopy the signed original and mail the original to the district office. A photocopy will be sent to the Washington office by HOAES. An envelope addressed to the Washington office should be included with the package, along with a copy of the incoming letter.

Sincerely,

(Full Name)
(Title)

Enclosure:
Transmitted Correspondence

cc:
Washington Office



Figure 3.8